



# Illinois Veteran News

An Update from the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs ★ 3rd Quarter

## ★ From the Director

Several times I have mentioned the importance of our IDVA Veteran Service Officers. Questions are answered and claims are filed so you can receive the benefits you deserve. I know many of you have registered with one of our VSOs. If you know of an Illinois Veteran who need assistance, please encourage them to meet with one of fine men and women. You can find the closest office, contact information and hours on our website – [www.illinois.gov/veterans](http://www.illinois.gov/veterans)



Erica Jeffries

Have you nominated an Illinois Veteran for Illinois's Bicentennial Honor 200? The IDVA in partnership with the Illinois Bicentennial Office with support from Boeing and Walgreens will honor the work of 200 Veterans from across the State whose contributions are above and beyond the call of duty. Nominations will be evaluated on their achievements and on the extent to which their contributions have aided, benefited and provided inspiration to their community. Click [here](#) to find the guidelines and a nomination form. Please help us recognize these wonderful Illinois Veterans!

We have always posted our job opportunities on our website. Recently we have been posting many of our positions on our Facebook pages. If you are looking for a new opportunity, we encourage you to visit our FB page and read about the various IDVA positions available. Or help a fellow veteran who may be looking for a position and lead them to our website or FB page. You can find the contact information for all of our social media pages at the end of this newsletter.

## ★ Employee of the Quarter - Robert Arrigo



*Robert Arrigo is presented a certificate naming him Employee of the Quarter by Lester Robertson, Administrator of the IVH-Manteno Home.*

Robert Arrigo RN / Wound Care Nurse at the Manteno Veterans Home was chosen as the Employee of the Quarter. We thank Bob for his contributions to the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and his continued service to the Veterans of Illinois.

Bob's coworkers nominated him for his professional, generous manner and his knowledge for the best care possible to our members. Bob is one to be counted on and we thank him for being a team player.

Our mission at the IDVA is very simple. To serve those who have served. In doing so, we serve not only the men and women who have worn the uniform, but also their families. It is our privilege to be able to help our veterans receive the benefits they have earned through service to our nation. Our goal is to empower our veterans and their families to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

We know there are many veterans within our great state who do not require any assistance – but we still want to encourage you to "Stand Up and Be Counted!" by registering with your local VSO. In doing so, you're helping IDVA to do a better job of planning for services, seeking federal funding and understanding the needs of our veteran communities statewide. [Click here to register.](#)

**We Thank you for your service and for your sacrifice and we at the IDVA look forward to offering our services to You.**

## ★ News from Home



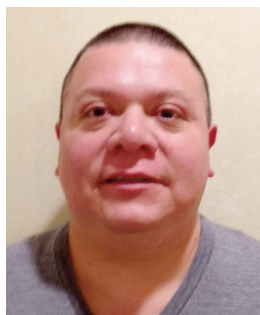
### Manteno home

#### We had a Great snow day today!

Olivet Nazarene University (ONU) Head Baseball coach Todd Reed and members of the baseball team came out to visit our members here at the Illinois Veterans Home Manteno during one of our 'snow' days.

The members enjoyed interacting with the players, playing board games, pool and sharing lunch from Jimmy Johns together.

## ★ New employees



### Anthony Hernandez Jr.

Anthony joined us on February 1st and is the new VSO in Forest Park at the Vet Center. Anthony is a veteran who retired after 24 years in the U.S. Navy. While on active duty he completed numerous overseas deployments onboard the USS SAVANNAH

(AOR 4), USS CARL VINSON (CVN 70), and USS ESSEX (LHA 2). Anthony served at 6 different shore commands and completed his last 5 years of active duty as the Chief Legalman (Paralegal) and Law Office Manager for the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, located in the Pentagon. His service awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (three awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (five awards) and numerous campaign medals and ribbons. He comes to us from USMEPCOM where he served as Intermediate Test Administrator with Chicago MEPS. Anthony lives in Hometown, IL, with his wife and 3 beautiful daughters. He enjoys spending quality time with his family, watching live sporting events and playing a good round of golf.



### Frederick "Rick" Murphy

Rick joined us on January 1st and is the new Agency Procurement Officer located in Springfield. Prior to coming to the DVA, Rick worked with the Illinois Department of Corrections both in the Purchasing and Fiscal/Grant divisions. Rick has worked with the State of Illinois

for over 10 years. He graduated from Southern Illinois University Carbondale with a BA in History and minors in Classical Civilizations and Museum Studies. Rick currently lives with his wife on their small farm in Blue Mound, where they raise Sheep and Rabbits and enjoy Gardening and spending time outdoors.



### Robert Ferrera

Robert has served as a Veteran Service Officer in Franklin County (Benton, IL) since 2014. Recently, he was named the Southern Division Supervisor, which was held by Earl White until his retirement. Robert is originally from Los Angeles and served in

the Marine Corps as an MP for four years. After the Marines he was a police officer in Southern California for 13 years until he was medical retired. He moved to Southern Illinois after being hired by the Department of Homeland Security. During that time, he returned to school and earned a BS in Organizational Management and a Masters in management. He and his wife have two children and one grandchild.



## ★ IDVA Calendar

- 04-18** Seek and Assist Tour – *Manteno*  
**04-19** DAV Veterans Job Fair – *Soldier Field*  
**04-21** Veterans Advisory Committee Meeting  
– *IVH Manteno*  
**04-25** House Appropriation Budget Hearing  
– *Springfield*  
**04-28** IVAC meeting – *IVH Anna*  
**May 8 & 9** – VSO Annual Training – *Springfield*  
**May 26** – Memorial Day Parade – *Chicago*  
**May 28** – Memorial Day – *Office Closed*

Find details about all these events and others on our Events page of our website -

<https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/about-us/events/Pages/default.aspx>

## ★ IDVA is Hiring

We have several positions open throughout the State of Illinois. If you go to our website [www.illinois.gov/veterans](http://www.illinois.gov/veterans) and click on IDVA employment, you will find all the positions available in our department. If you are interested in applying for a RN position, please contact the Veteran Home closest to you or our Central Office in Springfield. Click here for contact information for our HR office at each location - <https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/IDVAEmployment/Pages/default.aspx>

## ★ Follow us



IDVA website

[www.illinois.gov/veterans](http://www.illinois.gov/veterans)

Facebook

[www.facebook.com/IllinoisDepartmentOfVeteransAffairs](https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisDepartmentOfVeteransAffairs)

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisWomenVeterans/#>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/ILVetsAffairs>

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/il-dva>

## ★ 100-year-old Birthdays



*Mr. Melvin "Pete" Meierant receiving his certificate from Chief of Staff Renysa Brown.*

IDVA was privilege to be part of two wonderful birthday celebrations for two incredible Illinois Veterans. Mr. Melvin "Pete" Meierant Pete served with the 744th Ordinance Light Maintenance Company as a Technical Sergeant during WWII in Northern France. Pete has received 3 awards for his service; the Bronze Star medal, the European African Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon and a Good Conduct Medal. Pete, who claims to be the biggest STL Cardinal fan was visited by 'Fredbird' of the St. Louis Cardinals and given the opportunity to throw out the first pitch at the May 20 game at Busch Stadium.

Mr. Soliday, of Decatur served with the 163rd Infantry as a Tech Sergeant in the US Army. Mr. Soliday battled in the New Guinea campaign during WWII. Mr. Soliday received 5 awards for his service; American Defense Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Distinguished Unit Badge and the Good Conduct Medal. Director Erica Jeffries presented him a certificate from IDVA and telling him that she was honored and humbled to be in front of such an Illinois Hero.



*Mr. Irwin Soliday with IDVA Director Erica Jeffries just before the start of the ceremony*



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